LABOUR MONTHLY

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Britain's Crisis and World Crisis
R.P.D.

The Southport T.U.C. John Horner

The Punjab Riots P. C. Joshi

Book Reviews
Will Lawther
J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S.

OCTOBER, 1947

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

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Vol. XXIX. No. 10

CONTENTS

October, 1947

Page

Notes of the Month—*Britain's Crisis and World Crisis* by R. P. D. 289

The Southport T.U.C. by JOHN HORNER 299
(Gen. Secretary Fire Brigades Union)

The Fight for a Wages Policy by GEORGE ALLISON ... 303

U.S.A. and World Situation by JAMES KLUGMANN ... 306

The Punjab Riots by P. C. JOSHI 312
(Secretary Communist Party of India)

Book Reviews—

Looking Ahead by Harry Pollitt: *Will Lawther* 316
(President National Union of Mineworkers)

The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West by F. W. Walbank: *J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S.* ... 317

There is a Spirit in Europe: *M. J. Carritt* ... 318

The British General Election of 1945 by R. B. McCallum and A. Readman: *R. P. D.* ... 319

Shorter Notices 319

Correspondence 320

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY *will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into any correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.*

The articles in LABOUR MONTHLY *are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.*

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *United Kingdom,* 12 *months* 12*s. Postage paid. Abroad* 13*s. from* LABOUR MONTHLY, 134 *Ballards Lane, London, N.*3, *or from all leading wholesalers and bookshops.*

A stencilled Discussion Guide to the magazine is available to readers at 3*s. a year inclusive of postage.*

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Britain's Crisis and World Crisis

SO the showdown has been followed by surrender. As late as the beginning of August the Government still spoke as if the drain on dollars was temporary, and affirmed that the August figures would show an improvement and that convertibility could be maintained. By August 21 convertibility had to be suspended. The dollar loan was exhausted. Another colossal miscalculation had been followed by another colossal fiasco. The Government entered into close confabulations with the Federation of British Industries and the National Union of Manufacturers. On September 12 the outcome was announced in the Cripps Plan. The Cripps Plan seals the alliance of a Right Wing Labour Government and Big Business to seek to solve the crisis along orthodox capitalist lines at the expense of the workers. Slashing cuts in living standards, in social reconstruction and in the re-equipment of industry; a feverish drive, with obsolescent industrial equipment, to force up exports in a shrinking world market; obstinate maintenance of excessive armed forces and overseas commitments; no change in the disastrous imperialist foreign policy mainly responsible for the crisis; no proposals for limiting profits, already soaring to fantastic heights. Big Business reaction, voiced by Tory M.P.s thinly disguised as industrialists, purrs approval. "They were grateful to Sir Stafford Cripps; industry would welcome his sincere and courageous approach," declared the President of the Federation of British Industries. "They were at last facing realities," declared the President of the National Union of Manufacturers. Such is the outcome of two years of the rule of Social Democracy. The record of the Labour Government of 1929-31 was a mere pigmy rehearsal compared to the fullness of the record of Fabianism in office with an absolute parliamentary majority. And the real weight of the crisis is only beginning to make itself felt.

"We Will Not Let the U.S.A. Down"

On September 3, Mr. Bevin, in the course of his rodomontade to the Trades Union Congress, emphasised the "independence" of his policy from the United States:

> Mr. Bevin protested that he was accused of tying Great Britain to America. Amid loud cheers he declared: My God, I am here this morning to appeal to you to fight for our independence in the workshops. Who can accuse me of wanting to be subservient to East or West?

On September 10, exactly one week later, Mr. Bevin, addressing a more select audience of the American Legion at a dinner party at the Savoy Hotel, declared:

> My dear Americans, we may be short of dollars, but we are not short of will . . . We won't let you down.

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Britain is a great bastion in Europe. Our Western civilisation cannot go unless Britain falls—and Britain will not fall.

Standards of life may go back. We may have to say to our miners and to our steel workers: "We can't give you all we hoped for. We can't give you the houses we want you to live in. We can't give the amenities we desire to give you. But we won't fail."

In the contrast between these two utterances is expressed the essence of Britain's crisis.

Masks and Faces

For the working class audience the phony melodramatic breast-beating proclamation that all the cuts and austerity are the price to win "independence" from American domination, from the hated "moneylenders," from the "grip of the dollar." But for the "dear American" masters (very dear, with the price rising daily), in the more congenial atmosphere of the Savoy Hotel, the servile assurance of devotion that "Britain won't let the United States down," that cuts and austerity without limit will be imposed on the people in order that Britain may continue to serve as the "bastion" of "Western civilisation," i.e., of monopoly capitalism and imperialism under American leadership. Which is the mask and which is the face? The American overlords are not in much doubt. For, as *The Times* Washington correspondent shrewdly observes, American opinion has come to recognise the familiar procedure that, when Mr. Bevin addresses a working class audience, they must expect grand "slapstick duels" with the United States and the throwing of harmless "custard-pies." *The willingness of the working people to undergo sacrifices in order to win independence from the dominion of the dollar is misused for the opposite purpose—in order to pay the costs of the ruinous policies of the Anglo-American block of reaction.* This is the stage of the crisis reached today, which is expressed in the Government's present programme and in the right wing "reconstruction" of the Government.

An American View

Earlier in the year one of the most prominent American political commentators, Walter Lippmann, had already described, with that cruel clarity with which capitalist commentators are always able to probe the ills and sores of their capitalist neighbours, the character of Britain's developing crisis. Writing in February of this year, he noted:

It is not a bit too early to begin facing up to the fact that in the United Kingdom and in the Empire the post-war difficulties are appearing faster than solutions can be found and applied. A crisis of great dimensions is manifestly in the making which, if it were allowed to run its course, could shake the world and make our own position highly vulnerable and precariously isolated.

Wherein did he see the essence of this crisis?

The task which the peoples in the British Isles have had to set themselves is beyond anything which a free people has ever attempted in time of peace.

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They are trying to earn enough to maintain an austere standard of life at home *and to support their far-flung commitments abroad.*

To make themselves solvent *in this sense* they need to produce and export abroad 175 per cent. of what they exported in 1938.

They are attempting to do it with an industrial plant which was for the most part none too modern and under war conditions could not be adequately maintained.

Moreover, they are being asked to do all this in a great hurry—before the Canadian and American credits are used up. The time is too short. The margin on which they are operating is too thin.

What was his conclusion?

The collapse of the British attempt at post-war reconstruction is not inconceivable. It is even probable, if heroic measures are not taken in time. If the collapse occurs, the United States will be politically and economically isolated from Europe, and indeed from the greater part of the Eurasian continent.

This was not the prediction of a left critic of the Labour Government's policy. It was the expression of the rising alarm of the American financial oligarchy, which had backed the loan to Britain openly on the grounds (clearly set out in the United States Chamber of Commerce Report at the time in favour of the loan) that British Labourism under Bevin, Attlee and Morrison represented the best bulwark in American interests against the advance of socialism and communism in Europe, and which now began to fear they had backed a loser.

A Spent Pawn

With this prediction in February may be compared the American official view today after the crisis as set out in the State Department's Report on Britain and Europe originally prepared as a confidential report for the Congress representatives visiting Europe and published in the New York *Herald-Tribune* of September 7:

Britain is no longer an equal member of the Big Three; and her main problem in the reduction of her foreign commitments is to make such reductions in an orderly fashion and so that the relative power of the Soviet Union will not be augmented. Unless the grave financial crisis which now confronts the United Kingdom is soon remedied one way or the other, it will jeopardise Britain's ability to co-operate in the foreign economic objectives of this Government.

The monkey's paw has shrivelled in the fire, and the cat, which has no wish to use its own paws, takes alarm. Hence the desperate moves and counter-moves of the Marshall proposals and subsequent swiftly changing manœuvres, which have only served, not to bring an orderly solution, but to reveal and intensify all the contradictions, not merely in Britain and Western Europe, but also of American policy, torn between the desire to utilise the crisis to expand American domination in Europe at the expense of Britain, the fear to assist the reconstruction of potential rivals, the fear of collapse in Europe leading to radical social and economic policies, and the alarm at the rising crisis facing American capitalism.

Unpredictable Uncle

In consequence the original confident expectations of Government Ministers that the crisis in Britain would be speedily allayed by a flow

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of dollars to come to the rescue of such a faithful, docile and indispensable ally have so far met with successive rebuffs, agonising delays and uncertainties, and ruthless raising of the demands for British capitulation both in external and internal policy. The instability of the foundations of the Anglo-American block is revealed; the antagonism of Anglo-American economic and commercial interests is brought out sharply by the advance of the crisis. Every successive event demonstrates that the British people must tackle the solution of the crisis by their own strength, in association with allies whose interests coincide with Britain's interests. But this requires a basic change of policy, both at home and abroad, and a different kind of Government. The solution of the crisis cannot be accomplished within the conditions and limitations of the Anglo-American block. The bankruptcy of the Churchill-Bevin policy has become inescapable.

A Programme of Bankruptcy

The panic makeshift measures of the F.B.I.-Cripps programme cannot solve the crisis because they do not touch the causes. After inflicting a mortal sickness on the patient, these physicians demand, while continuing the doses of poison, a super-mortal effort of achievement from the sick man. But the crisis is not some sudden unforeseeable, unforeseen emergency to be met by a sudden spurt of effort and deprivation. On the contrary, the onset of the crisis, in consequence of the Government's policy, was visible throughout these two years and was continuously predicted, not only by the left in this country, but in the later stages by all clear-sighted foreign observers, as the Lippmann extract given before illustrates. Nor was there dispute as to the cause of the visibly approaching crash. Against the background of Britain's changed position in the world, of the long-term imperialist decline, the decisive immediate cause was seen by all observers, as the Lippmann extract again illustrates, in the irreconcilable conflict between the urgent needs of reconstruction at home and the crippling burdens of the Government's foreign policy of grandiose overseas commitments. Without the overseas commitments the actual deficit on the balance of payments would have been less in real values than pre-war (£100 million in 1946 against £70 million in 1938).

"Suicide While of Unsound Mind"

The crisis latent in this conflict was concealed for two happy-go-lucky years by the American loan, which was not spent on reconstruction, but squandered for the purposes of the foreign policy of the Anglo-American block. So soon as the loan is finished, the conflict is in the open. It can no longer be side-stepped. Either one or the other must be sacrificed. Either the foreign policy must be changed, and all resources devoted to planned reconstruction at home, in association with a planned policy of international economic co-operation. This is the programme demanded by the left. Or reconstruction

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at home must be sacrificed to the requirements of the existing foreign policy, with ever more deadly burdens placed upon the people and increasing dependence on American imperialism. This is the line of the F.B.I.-Cripps programme, which can only deepen the crisis and reduce Britain finally to a colony of dollar domination. It is symbolically appropriate that in this programme, while £200 million are still estimated for Government overseas expenditure this year (equivalent to more than half the increase in exports demanded), £200 million are to be cut from capital investment for home reconstruction. If Britain under this treatment were to go down to the final extremity of catastrophe, the only verdict could be "Suicide While of Unsound Mind."

Convertibility Blunder

Why, with this critical and worsening economic situation obvious to all, and even reaching desperate conditions by July, did the Cabinet and their financial advisers decide on July 15, in the face of previous warnings and predictions from every side, to carry through convertibility of sterling with the dollar? The outcome is known and exactly corresponded to every warning. It drained away something like a quarter of the loan in a few weeks, and ended in exhaustion of the loan and the collapse of August 21. The hæmorrhage of the previous two years' policy had been followed by the reckless bloodletting of convertibility to finish off the patient. Why was such official optimism maintained over the operation that even as late as August 7 Dalton in his speech was still arguing that the drain was temporary and the situation would improve in August? After the event the Treasury experts have admitted that they miscalculated. But why was the original decision taken, which a leading financial authority has termed "the greatest blunder in British financial history"?

Anglo-American Antagonism

Was it American pressure? The rigid terms of the Loan Agreement? But it has been freely stated in the American press, and not denied here, that the American Government at the final critical moment, through Clayton, made urgent and repeated representations against attempting convertibility, and that Dalton and the Treasury decided on their precipitate action in the face of American advice. Here we come to the crux of the position, which reveals the dilemma of Anglo-American relations under the Bevin-Churchill dispensation. While the general worsening of Britain's situation during the past two years reflects the pressure of American policy on British economy, the final blunder of convertibility reflected the other side of the picture, the deepening Anglo-American economic antagonism which is the reverse side of the diplomatic collaboration. It represented the desperate attempt, without any basis or justification in the economic situation, to establish sterling on an equality with the dollar. In this

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sense it corresponded to the previous famous ill-omened decision of 1925, also under Churchill's leadership, to re-establish the gold standard, before it could be justified by the economic, trading or productive situation in Britain, in order that " the pound should look the dollar in the face." But then it took six years before the collapse came in 1931. This time the collapse came in five weeks.

1931 and 1947

" This is not 1931," declared emphatically a Labour M.P. in the recent parliamentary debate. This statement is correct chronologically, and also in a more basic sense. There is no parallel in the character of the present "crisis" in Britain and the Western capitalist world and that of 1929-32. Then it was a question of a regular, though extreme, cyclical crisis of capitalism, supervening on the general crisis of capitalism—a crisis of overproduction, which began in the United States and spread through the world. Today, in conditions of extreme post-war unsettlement and devastation, Britain and Western Europe are suffering from a crisis of under-production, which is aggravated by American economic policy as well as by reactionary governmental policy, while the United States is approaching a "normal" economic crisis. But there are certain superficial parallels, especially in the politics of the situation, which are not without significance. Then also a reformist Labour Government entered with blissful unconsciousness into the vortex (as late as April 31, 1931, the *Daily Herald* was still loudly proclaiming " Britain Heading Towards Prosperity: Trade Blizzard Ending"). Then also the pivot of the situation turned on the disparity of development of the United States and Europe, now brought to an extreme height. Then also Labour Ministers anxiously awaited the dictates of the American financiers, who proceeded to lay down the law for British internal development and demanded a 10 per cent. cut in unemployment benefit. But here a break in the parallel occurs, which has not yet its counterpart today. For then the whole labour movement rose in revolt against the dictation of the American financiers, and forced the hands of the vacillating Labour Ministers; so that only the handful of renegade Ministers at the head of the Cabinet accepted the American demands, and had to move over into coalition with the Tories to carry them out, while the Labour Party passed into opposition. Today it is the Labour Cabinet which is obeying the American demands, postponing nationalisation plans and imposing cuts on the people; there is no question in present circumstances of formal coalition, since the practical coalition already exists with the Federation of British Industries and the National Union of Manufacturers.

United States Crisis

United States preponderance in the capitalist world is enormously greater today than in the nineteen-thirties, just as the towering contradictions and instability of its economic system are even more extreme.

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On the other hand, the strength of the socialist and progressive democratic sector of the world is also enormously greater, and represents already a powerful camp of economic and political co-operation which is independent of imperialism and impervious to American threats. Hence the dangers today for Britain and the Western European countries still under the shadow of American domination are much greater; but also the alternative path is much more clearly visible and open to approach. The United States is today the decisive centre of the capitalist world; whatever happens in the United States affects the immediate fate of every capitalist country. The collapse of sterling on August 21 sent its reverberations throughout the world. But the most serious fact about the present situation is that, whereas in 1929-31 the economic crisis in the United States set going the chain of repercussions throughout the world, today, while Britain and Western Europe are already in the most extreme and worsening economic difficulties, the economic crisis in the United States is only beginning to develop. All the familiar signs are manifest: not only the culmination of the crazy boom of profits and prices above the war peak (profits of the largest corporations for the first quarter of 1947, 82 per cent. above 1945, and prices 50 per cent. above), but also the deepening gulf of profits and wages (total pay roll of manufacturing reduction for the first quarter only 21 per cent. above 1945), beginnings of contraction of the home market, temporary expansion of exports to four times pre-war and then the beginning since May of decline of exports, and since the first quarter the beginnings of the decline of the volume of production. The full significance of this prospect for the development of the world crisis is not yet appreciated in Britain. Else there would be less easy talk about expanding British exports by 60 per cent. by the end of next year, or looking to the reeling Colossus of Wall Street as the " saviour " for restoring stability in Europe.

Contradictions of U.S. Policy

If the whole unhappy experience of the Marshall "Plan" negotiations and Paris Conference have shown one thing more clearly than another, it is the hopeless contradictions of present United States policy in Europe. On the one hand, the United States wishes to expand its exports, and has expanded them to a rate of 20 billion dollars, as against 4.6 billion pre-war. On the other hand, the United States wishes to keep out imports, and has kept them out with such success that export surplus is running at nigh 13 billion dollars a year. On the one hand, the United States wishes to break down all tariffs of other countries in the name of freedom of trade; on the other hand, it insists on maintaining its own tariffs at the highest level. But the consequent export surplus inevitably results in universal dollar shortage, all-round bans on dollar imports and consequent prospect of drying up of the exports, which President Truman has designated as the main factor delaying depression. Hence the United States, after precipitately

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closing down Unrra and insisting on a policy of loans only on commercial terms, is compelled to come back to a caricature of the Rooseveltian policy of large-scale credits, but under anti-Rooseveltian auspices. Thus on the one hand, the United States is compelled in its own interests to propose large-scale credits to Europe; on the other hand, it does not want those credits to assist progressive reconstruction on the lines of planned economy or strengthen the democratic forces of the left in Europe; the credits must conform with the Truman Doctrine of aid only to reactionary regimes.

Warring Appetites and Fears

But from this springs yet another contradiction. For on the one hand the United States, especially the Treasury, wants any credits to represent a sound investment from a financial point of view; on the other hand, the only countries with a stable developing economy are the socialist and progressive democratic countries which are successfully building up their economy on a planned basis, and are therefore excluded from receiving credits, while the reactionary regimes to which American credits are poured out, such as Greece, Turkey and Chiang Kai-Shek, represent bottomless wells of corruption in which billions of dollars disappear without trace. From all this welter of contradictions, from the jumble of conflicting appetites and fears which constitutes the present physiognomy of the rulers of America, arise the confused, shifting, ever-changing outlines of the mythical Marshall " Plan " as the attempted solution—to impose an "integrated economy" on Western Europe which shall override any national planning and ensure dominant American control over any reconstruction. But in view of the welter of contradictions, it is not surprising that even the sixteen docile Governments duly gathered together in Paris to receive the hoped for legacy from the rich uncle, should find themselves driven to exasperation by the endless uncertainties, delays, ambiguities, changes of plan, scoldings and corrections imposed on them by their prospective patron.

Colonising Western Europe

Nevertheless, there is a plan behind the non-existent " Marshall Plan," and its outlines are by now tolerably clear. After the outcome of the weeks of travail of the unhappy sixteen has been suitably expunged and wiped out by the master hand emerging from behind the scenes, the imposed Clayton Plan is now announced to be ready for adoption in order next to navigate the rapids of American legislative institutions. The pretence of American invisibility and non-intervention has now been dropped. It is an American plan for Western Europe, to be run by a board or super-national directing organism under American control. The plan reveals the familiar features of Hitler's " New Europe "—this time under American control. The " integrated economy " is to be built around the Ruhr and Western Germany as the " power-house of Europe "—that is,

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around the already semi-colonial area under American monopolist control, to which the economies of the other countries with democratic regimes, and capable of dangerous independent development, are to be subordinated. The French representatives who were permitted to attend the Anglo-American Conference on the Ruhr and be informed of the decisions, rather like Czechoslovakia at Munich, were staggered to learn that, not the steel industry of France, but the steel industry of the Ruhr was to be developed. Priority goes to the reconstruction of heavy industry in the Ruhr and Western Germany. As for the other European countries, " in obedience to the United States demand, all requests for machinery and other capital goods have been removed from the Marshall Plan " (*New Statesman and Nation,* September 6). In short, the plan is not a plan to aid the industrial development and reconstruction of the European countries. It is a plan to restrict the industrial development and subordinate the economic structure of the European countries, as in a colonial economy, to the requirements of American domination.

Britain in the American " New Order "

And Britain? Where does Britain come in the grand American " New Order " of a colonial economy for Western Europe? Alas, Britain does not appear to rank very high. Germany is given priority for Europe, just as Japan is given priority for Asia; and from both of these, British interests are being systematically squeezed out. German engineering and industrial exports are to be rapidly expanded with American aid—an interesting prospect for Cripps' hopes of rapidly expanding British engineering and industrial exports. German light engineering is to be raised to a level representing 130 per cent. of 1936. The Japanese textile industry is being rapidly developed under American control to dominate the Asiastic markets—another interesting prospect for Cripps' hopes of rapidly expanding British textile exports. And the Canberra Conference has just witnessed British and Australian capitulation before the MacArthur regime in Japan. British heavy industry is not to be encouraged; capital investment must be drastically cut down; above all, the steel industry must not be nationalised, but must be held within the tight grip of restrictive monopoly. Here the prospective Republican presidential candidate, Stassen, has given the game away and expressed the American orders aloud. The Government has climbed down, followed by the General Council of the T.U.C. (but two and one-third millions stood firm).

Towards the New Colonial Order?

What, then, is to be the line of development of British economy? Harriman, United States Secretary of Commerce, has given the orders. Britain must export coal. And, sure enough, the Federation of British Industries and all the big business press are now emphasising the programme that Britain must export coal, even at the expense of the needs of home industry, even at the expense of some " under-

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employment" at home. This, after all, would hit two birds with one stone: to fit in with the requirements of the Marshall Plan, and with the aid of a little salutary "under-employment" (blessed word) to bring down the level of the workers. Coal for export; agriculture (without technical renovation); some textiles and light industry and luxury trades; whisky (at 5s a bottle for the native producers, the rest of the final price of 50s going to the American monopolists); tourism; supply of troops for any rough-house work to be done in Greece, Palestine or the Middle East. Yes: America has a kind of "plan" for Britain. And the more it is examined, the more it conforms to the familiar outlines of a colonial economy. There has been a great deal of talk about Britain becoming the "49th State" of the U.S.A. But public opinion has not yet considered the possibility of the prospect that, if the present line of policy is continued, the ultimate fate for Britain would be very much more like Britain becoming a colonial dependency of America—not as a rhetorical phrase, but in harsh economic reality, however veiled in polite sentiments of cousinhood. For American Big Business is certainly not interested in rebuilding Britain as a powerful industrial competitor.

The Battle for Independence

The new Battle for Britain is on now. Nostalgic celebrants of seven-year-old memories would do well to awaken to present realities. The Southport Trades Union Congress showed that the progressive sections of the working class are stirring and determined to fight. The consistent left vote of two to three millions, as well as the defeat of the General Council on a number of important issues, including the demand for a real economic plan free from imperialist commitments, for trade with the Soviet Union and new democracies, and for decisive measures against fascism, revealed the high level of fight achieved and the rising strength of the left, even though not yet their victory. The line of the dominant right wing leadership, which was still able to govern the main decisions, was the line of capitulation to big business at home and American imperialist domination. But even the theatrical Bevin oration had to be covered up in the dressing of a sham fight against dollar domination—thereby laying bare the true feelings of the entire working class. The theatrical tinsel will shrivel in the scorching fires of the crisis as surely as the similar theatrical tinsel of the MacDonalds and Thomas shrivelled in the crisis of 1931. The Cabinet's present programme of retreat from nationalisation and social reconstruction, cutting of standards, protection of high profits and capitulation to America, a programme forged in coalition with the Federation of British Industries and the National Union of Manufacturers, is a challenge to everything for which the labour movement stands and for which the people voted in the election. Only a complete change of course, under a Government representative of the united progressive sections of the labour movement and the people, can solve the present deepening crisis, raise production, protect the

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standards of the people, and win the true independence of Britain as a progressive democratic country co-operating with the progressive democratic countries of the world. This fight will now go forward; and to this fight all who care for the future of Britain and are ready in truth to face the future must now direct their united efforts.

September 18, 1947. R. P. D.

THE SOUTHPORT T.U.C.

By JOHN HORNER

(General Secretary, Fire Brigades' Union)

" That's a great deal to make one word mean," Alice said in a thoughtful tone. " When I make a word do a lot of work like that," said Humpty Dumpty, " I always pay it extra." " Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night," Humpty Dumpty went on, wagging his head gravely from side to side: " for to get their wages, you know."

" You seem very clever at explaining words, sir," said Alice.

" EMPIRE Customs Union " for choice and you get the Congress; but not all Congress. At Margate, under the arc-lights, Bevin, entourage fore and aft, strode down the aisle to the platform, the Conference rising to its feet. At Southport, the procedure was not quite the same. The arc-lights, the dignified procession was there. A little hesitantly the platform rose, with ill-concealed embarrassment. Hardly a delegate stirred from his seat. It appeared as though this was going to be something different. Was it? Margate was a complete triumph for the great man. At Southport, after he had sat down, the Congress overwhelmingly defeated an amendment criticising his policy. There was a difference, however. Almost before the applause to his speech had died away, a delegate was on the rostrum deploring the breakdown of the Anglo-Soviet Trade talks, and suggesting that American influence might well have been a factor leading to that failure. " I will give Mr. Truman a piece of advice," he said. " Let him climb the Statue of Liberty, remove the torch of freedom, and replace it with the Three Brass Balls." The spell was broken.

Despite the newspaper reports, Southport was a failure for the Government. A thousand delegates were meeting straight from facing the problems of the crisis as they showed themselves to the workers in the factories. They were looking for a clear, courageous lead that would inspire and encourage their members. No previous Government ever had the priceless treasure at the disposal of this one, the trusting support of millions of Trade Unionists. Congress was meeting on the eve of the greatest crisis that has ever threatened the living standards and independence of this nation. What happened?

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George Isaacs was the first speaker for the Government. As one delegate put it, "When George began to speak, it seemed the Government was experiencing certain difficulties. Some unforeseen obstacles had arisen. By the time he had finished, with a little direction of labour here, some cuts there, we were well on the road to a prosperous Socialist Britain!"

The General Council's Supplementary Report on the economic situation contained a paragraph the acceptance of which by Congress would have meant support for the modest direction of labour proposed by Isaacs. The rest was largely milk and water. Yet because of the ruling of the Chairman (not the best Chairman ever) delegates who wanted to support labour control and yet to oppose the rest of the Report because of the lack of a real Socialist plan, were prevented from clearly defining their position. To have opposed the whole Report would have been to support those delegations who would have no form of labour control at all, although one General Secretary did go so far as to say that he would coerce the spivs and drones by stopping their unemployment pay! The General and Municipal Workers' Union delegation was among these.

The absence of any forcible leadership from the platform made one think of what might have been happening had such a magnificently represented Conference been meeting in, say, Czechoslovakia.

The Government cannot ignore the fact that despite its apologists on the platform, its overall policy was the subject of persistent criticism not from any noisy minority, but from a large body of informed critics who were able, and, in fact, did propose constructive alternatives as to how to face the coming storm. There was the difference from Margate.

Every reference, no matter how vague, to "standing on our own feet," was taken to relate to the need to break away from American influence and was greeted with applause. One got the feeling that despite the manner in which the large Card Votes were cast the delegates as a whole had a clear vision of what was necessary. Lincoln Evans, of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, referred to the delegates as the "ruling class of this country." He was met with a wave of guffaws. There were no illusions on that subject at Southport, whereas at last year's Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth, such a statement would have been applauded. Despite the fact that the Government's letter assured the General Council that there was no change in policy with regard to the ultimate nationalisation of steel, over 2,300,000 votes were cast in support of the Resolution demanding a Bill on the matter during this Session of Parliament.

The Composite Resolution on Planning and Production declared, amongst other things, that the "Government should adopt a bold policy of reorganisation which will eliminate imperialistic commitments, and ensure that our import and export trades are firmly linked with all other democratic countries building a planned economy."

George Gibson, on behalf of the General Council, said that

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while they supported the Resolution they had some qualifications to make about "imperialistic commitments." He said that we had responsibilities in Kenya and Tanganyika in our development schemes which could not lightly be thrown off. The delegate, in his reply, told Gibson not to worry about the Ground Nut Schemes in Africa. "What concerns us," he said amid cheers, "are the commitments in Greece and Spain!"

The Resolution was carried unanimously.

We cannot but note the 3,000,000 votes that went against the General Council's line on Spain and Greece.

Most significant was the reception given to Mr. Richardson, the delegate from the American Federation of Labour (Richardson is my counterpart in the States, and was over here to attend our International Firemen's Conference. Was my face red!)

This was the third occasion on which the Congress had been treated to a violent anti-Soviet tirade from the A.F. of L. delegate. This time it was too much. Congress has never witnessed such a storm of catcalls as met George Richardson. Only by declaring that the General Council profoundly disagreed with him was the Chairman able to restore order; but the significance of these repeated sinister attempts to split the World Federation of Trade Unions must not go unnoticed. Next morning the delegates were determined to repay it in full, and when Kuypers, of the W.F.T.U., rose to speak, he was given the warmest reception at Congress. If Richardson had wanted to strengthen the comradely feelings the British Trades Unionists have for the World Federation he could not have improved upon his poisonous attack.

As the week went by the class feelings of the delegates were more and more strongly expressed. The quiet speech by the little Jewish Baker on the activities of the fascists in the East End of London brought Conference sitting up. That section of the Report which said that the General Council were "carefully and constantly considering the matter" was thrown back almost with contempt.

Prices and profits were the subject of a Resolution moved by the Transport and General Workers' Union, seconded by the Miners' Union. The last paragraph urged the Government to create "immediately more effective machinery for the investigation of costs of production and distribution and the level of profits; and in the interest of industrial morale and production to take such action as is found necessary to protect the interests of the consumer and the purchaser."

That is pretty close to the bone.

The Transport and General Workers' resolution dealing with trade with the Soviet Union and calling for "more positive steps by way of developing reciprocal trading," was carried unanimously. It was not all gloom at Southport!

Yet the Resolution calling for a substantial reduction in the armed forces was withdrawn in the light of a vague sentence in the Council's Report. Congress moreover supported a resolution which

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paid tribute to the work of the Foreign Secretary. Was it due to Bevin's undoubted capacity for speaking to trade union audiences? Not at all. The fact is that the majority of the delegations were unable to appreciate the contradictions embodied in the resolution, when contrasted with the support they were readily giving to every assertion which would lead to our freedom from the dollar. It is true, of course, that Bevin's speech in itself was a masterpiece of demagogy. But through all the verbiage it was clear that Ernest Bevin was telling the British working class that they must tighten their belts; that he was standing pat on his disastrous foreign policy; that there would be no real reduction in the armed forces if he could help it. "I am all for disarmament, but I represent a London constituency and I'll never leave those people naked again to what they had to endure in '40 and '41." The connection between the presence of British troops in Greece and Palestine and protection of the people of Wandsworth against atomic warfare, is clear only to Bevin!

His declaration that the November Conference of Foreign Ministers may be the last chance may well come to be regarded as a warning that America with Britain in tow will seek to crystallise the division of Europe. At one time Mr. Bevin said "And now I'm going to say something which may upset my American friends." We sat forward expectantly. "I say to them that they would help to solve this balance of payments problem by distributing some of the Fort Knox gold." There, it was out! And this was the man who, five minutes before, had been condemning Churchill for putting us back on the gold standard in 1925! "If only we could find another gold mine," he added. His customs Union for the Empire brought him alongside Lord Beaverbrook. And finally, in moving tones, he called for more production in order to free ourselves from America. "My God, I am here to appeal to you to fight for our independence in the workshop." On "dollar diplomacy," he said, "You know you won't settle this matter with slogans." And then (welcoming the Marshall plan with the further prospect of American dollars) he took the majority of Conference with him as he sat down.

The debate on Foreign Policy thus became a debate on Bevin's speech. Those supporting the Government invoked his massive figure as the man they had all known for many years and in whom they were prepared to put their trust. Would such a man knowingly weaken Labour at home or abroad? It was Russia that was being difficult. We all wanted a united Europe. "But Europe would be split," said one opposition speaker, "not by Russia's so-called iron curtain but by the American plan to base Europe's revival upon a German heavy industry built as a cartel of private capitalists." "We have been accused of using slogans," said another. "If the stopping of lease-lend within a few days of the election of the Labour Government, the crippling terms of the American loan, the winding-up of U.N.R.R.A., the aid to Greece and Turkey, and the denial of that aid to Yugoslavia, the squeeze upon Britain to get control of the Ruhr

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is not 'dollar diplomacy,' then words have no meaning in the English language."

At Southport the alternatives to Bevin's policy were stated. As we descend deeper into this crisis so those alternatives will come to be studied, understood and supported by the Movement as a whole. In spite of all the confusion engineered by the apologists from the platform the issues were placed before the workers. A socialist plan and not one that will commend itself to the Federation of British Industries, trade with countries who because they control their domestic economies are able to plan foreign trade, the abandonment of a suicidal foreign policy which keeps over a million men in the armed forces, and nearly half-a-million working to keep them there. Freedom from American imperialism which would destroy Labour throughout the world. The case was put.

At Margate, after Bevin, the debacle of the Left: at Southport, after Bevin, a concrete alternative policy which will yet come to be accepted by our Movement as the only way to prosperity and national independence.

THE FIGHT FOR A WAGES POLICY

By GEORGE ALLISON

"WE have been caught in a maelstrom of Government White Papers" was the phrase used by a leader of the Building Workers referring to the rejection of the Unions' demands by the National Arbitration Tribunal. We had in mind the two documents issued by the Government at the beginning of the year, both of which called for a halt in the wage demands being put forward by the Unions. The Tribunal, at work on the Building Workers' claim and the Government pronouncements, did indeed create a feeling in Trade Union circles that the Government would strongly discourage any new wage claims. The employers ironically had the necessary extracts on hand in wage talks with the Unions.

This was still the line of the Government and the Labour Party up to the Whitsun Conference. It is set forth in the official Party publication "Labour for Higher Production," despite the fact that Railwaymen, Agricultural Workers, Builders and Busmen were all by that time putting forward programmes involving hours, wages and conditions of employment.

At the Labour Party Conference the Miners put forward a resolution on wages, which was supported from the platform and carried by a large majority in Conference against the opposition of the Leaders of the Transport Union and the N.U.R. The Miners' resolution was perfectly straightforward and in line with the main points of the Government's Economic Survey. It simply asked that the Government should operate a policy of incentives that would

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attract labour to the undermanned industries and argued that failure to do this would constitute a grave threat to the economic recovery of the country. It is strange that a resolution couched in those terms should be opposed by Messrs. Deakin and Benstead and that their sentiments are echoed by quite a number of Trade Union leaders, who did not take part in the debate.

In the meantime, Railwaymen, Busmen and Agricultural Workers have got some concessions on wages and conditions and the million odd building workers have now the opportunity of accepting a new agreement giving them 3d an hour increase worked to a system of payment by results, which will mean even bigger increases to a fairly large percentage of building operatives. But all the time, it has to be noted, the wage increases are being paid by the consumer through the raising of prices.

It is on this background that Mr. Attlee in the Economic Debate in Parliament has declared that this is not a time to go in for increased wages, and in the same breath he makes the feeble appeal that private enterprise should at present refrain from *declaring* big profits and high dividends. Presumably they can carry on making them, but keep it dark. From all this we can draw one or two conclusions.

The Government doesn't have a fixed policy on wages, prices and profits that can be related to a general plan of economic recovery. There is no clear understanding in the leadership of the Trade Union movement that wages policy must be related in a detailed way to the general needs of the nation; unless we are to have chaos instead of planning. And because of these two factors, the manpower of the nation and the advance guard in the ranks of the Labour and Trade Union Movement are not being mobilised as the vital force that can lift Britain on to the road of economic well-being and prosperity.

We should be under no illusions. The fight to get a correct conception of a wages policy and its relation to planning as a whole involves a strenuous campaign in Parliament and throughout the working class movement. It involves nothing more nor less than a re-valuation of the various sections of industry and trade.

It means quite simply that all sections of the movement must appreciate the need for a permanent, relative improvement in working conditions, welfare, safety and above all wages, in precisely those industries—mining, agriculture, textiles chiefly—that were despised alike by those inside and outside in the years between the wars. We cannot again visualise the possibility of a steady drift from our basic industries, towards the higher paid and less essential occupations.

We cannot revert to that crazy kind of economy that condemned the agricultural labourer to a form of modern feudalism and allowed the middlemen to make small fortunes, or even the system that could afford higher wages for hawking coal round the streets than digging it in the pits. The undermanned industries are vital, not only to the

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nation's recovery from the present crisis, but for quite a long time ahead.

This is a problem for the whole nation and not just something concerning the workers affected. Its solution will simultaneously speed our economic reconstruction and free us for all time from the very worst features of Tory rule and the machinations of British imperialism. Failure to solve it means that we play into the hands of those who are working for the downfall of the Labour Government and the destruction of the programme on which it was elected. While this is one of the major problems in the sense that it calls for a greater degree of fundamental clarity in the Trade Union Movement, it is by no means the only one.

One of the accompanying issues came up at the Southport Trades Union Congress in the form of a resolution (carried unanimously) on Profits and Wages. This resolution expresses serious concern at the rise in commodity prices, insists that stricter control of costs and profits is necessary, and

" urges the Government to create immediately more effective machinery for the investigation of costs of production and distribution and of the level of profits; and, in the interests of morale and production, to take such action as is found necessary to protect the interests of the consumer and the purchasing power of wages."

The resolution is indeed timely because nothing was said by Government spokesmen in the August Parliamentary Debate that takes us beyond the fringe of the problem. Nor is anything changed by the new Cost of Living Index. Yet wages are lagging behind prices, and the " City " reveals far more confidence than the Trade Union Branch. The spirit behind this resolution is in reality a class challenge. When the Government begins to apply such a policy, the working class response will beat even the best war-time achievements in the field of productive effort—because the working class will have faith in their future and will respond to the need for ever expanding production. Wages policy in relation to production also needs to be more clearly defined. It is not enough to say " incentive bonus for piece work." *Every* improvement in productive methods that increases output must be amply reflected in the pay packets of plain and time workers alike.

Finally, there remain the two old-established problems that must be solved—equal pay and the conditions of young workers.

What are the real motives behind all this stubborn resistance to a most elementary principle? The resolution passed at the Margate Labour Party Conference, against the opposition of the platform, has been ignored. And now the Trades Union Congress has charged the General Council " to use its full resources to engage without delay in vigorous co-ordinated activity to secure the implementation of Congress policy of equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities for women."

The arguments have all been put times without number. By applying the principle now, the Government can strengthen its own

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position and strengthen the fight of the trades unions against a dangerous weapon now in the hands of the employers.

Similarly, with regard to Youth problems. To go after wages alone for the young workers, leads to the blind alley job; but wages linked to all-round training, that opens up a future for new entrants which can guarantee a steady supply of labour to all essential industries.

What then are the cardinal points in a Wages Policy suited to the present and future needs of the country:

1. Raise the standard in all the undermanned essential industries.
2. Ensure that wage rates and incentive payments keep pace with higher productivity and greater output.
3. Vigorous control of prices and profits.
4. Equal pay for equal work—the rate for the job and safeguards against all forms of blind-alley occupations.

Such a policy allied to an overall economic plan will bring forth higher dividends than all the hue and cry against the spivs and the drones. By all means round them up, but don't restrict the efforts to barrow lads, ticket racketeers and West End dance hall checks on identity cards. Cast the net to the City, the West End clubs, Royal Ascot and Glorious Goodwood. But don't use the hunt for the "won't works" as an alibi.

A Wages Policy based on class lines will do more than a man-hunt. Britain will be saved by Britain's workers. Let the Government strike out and recapture the confidence and enthusiasm that sent them into office. This means a change in policy and in all likelihood some changes in personnel. Better do that now than regret it later.

U.S.A. AND WORLD SITUATION

By JAMES KLUGMANN

TWENTY months after VE day the capitalist world moves into deep crisis. Mid-September, 1947, for the people of Great Britain, means the announcement of new plans for cutting imports to the tune of a further £228 million and perspectives of hard labour to increase exports by a further £372 millions per year (including large quantities of luxuries for the rich of the dollar zones) at the expense once again of home consumption, building, and modernisation of British industries. Nor is any clear line provided by the Government as to how long the crisis will last, when the tide will turn, when the worker, employee and harassed housewife can expect better days.

During the five weeks of convertibility from mid-July Britain's dollars were drained at the mad rate of 700 million dollars per month. The ending of convertibility brought the crisis sharply to a head in other dollar-starved capitalist countries. In France, for example, the Minister of National Economy announced on August 29th that, as a

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consequence of Britain's suspension of convertibility, France had been obliged to abandon the dollar zone for the sterling zone. Negotiations were being opened up with Egypt and India for the import of cotton previously obtained from the United States. Dollar imports were to be cut by 66⅔% and purchase of petrol, paper, cotton and non-ferrous metals from dollar sources were being suspended. By mid-September France was the scene of accelerating inflation, stiffly rising prices. The cost of living based on 29 items of food had risen 30 per cent. between January and August, 1947. The gold reserve following a further withdrawal of 90 tons had fallen from 2,159 tons in 1939 to 592 tons. The price of bread had doubled whilst the low quality bread ration had been reduced to 200 grammes per day. In Paris and the provinces the working people were demonstrating demanding an increase of the bread ration. The Monnet plan had been put by the Government indefinitely in cold storage. French exports to the dollar countries were one-tenth of her imports from the same area. The £62,500,000 loan granted by the World Bank some four months earlier had been expended at the rate of roughly £15,000,000 per month, leaving, at the end of September, precisely nothing.

This picture of dollar famine, rising prices, falling trade, rapidly lowering living standards of the working people had become, by the end of September, typical of the greater part of Western Europe. In Italy dollars were exhausted; there were over 2 million unemployed; with prices 60 times those of 1938, real wages of industrial workers were less than half pre-war and falling fast. Prices of rice, fruit, vegetables rose 40 per cent. in a single week, and there were mass strikes of workers, agricultural workers and "sharecroppers" involving millions. In Belgium prices rose rapidly (potatoes up 50 per cent. in the week ending September 10th) and workers went hungry. In Spain, General Franco's paradise, with wages still at 1936 level, the cost of living by September had risen 472 per cent.

The unhappy sixteen totting up their deficits at the Paris Conference found that Western European food production was less than two-thirds of the 1938 level and that 30 million tons of food would be needed annually from the United States until 1951. The Fuel Committee of the Conference reported that 40 million tons of American coal would be needed in 1948. The total deficit estimated (before being told to go back and think again by the U.S.A. representatives) was £5,624,750,000 for the four-year period 1948-1951. Even then the progressive reduction of the deficit was reported to depend on "greatly increased production, continuous full employment, full use of Europe's productive capacity, an assurance that goods can be sold to the American continent and the rest of the world, and progressive reduction of prices of imports into Europe in relation to Europe's export prices" (*Manchester Guardian, September* 12)—that is on a series of propositions that would *not* be fulfilled under continued capitalism.

Outside Europe, too, the ending of convertibility sharpened the

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crisis. The Australian Government announced a "stringent programme to reduce the gap of about 85 million dollars between Australian imports from the dollar area and exports to them" (*The Times, September* 3). Similar measures were discussed in other British Dominions. Meanwhile in Kuomintang China the cost of living rise was reported at the colossal figure of 41,203 times that of February, 1936, unemployment was growing apace, and chaos reigned whilst the Kuomintang Government begged for a further injection of U.S. dollars. Small wonder that the report of the 16 at Paris concluded helplessly. "It lies beyond the wit of man to prophesy the future" and that a prominent United States columnist was able to declare: "A blood transfusion is of little use if the patient is already dead" (*Economist, September* 13).

Whilst in Western Europe the crisis of under-production deepens, the U.S.A. itself moves towards a classic crisis of over-production. The policy of the U.S. Government has hastened the crisis in Western Europe which, in its turn, threatens to hasten the outbreak of the American slump.

U.S. profits, after taxes, have grown without interruptions since before the recent war:

CORPORATION PROFITS IN $ MILLIONS.

	Before Taxes	After Taxes
1939	6,467 ...	5,005
1940	9,325 ...	6,447
1942	21,098 ...	9,433
1944	23,841 ...	9,928
1946	21,140 ...	12,539

An August report of the National City Bank showed that total U.S. industrial earnings for the first six months of 1947 had risen even above the high level of 1946. A list of about 140 corporations analysed in the Wall Street Journal showed net profit for the quarter April-June, 1947, scarcely changed from the quarter January-March, 1947, and no less than 34 per cent. above the corresponding quarter of 1946. If the present tendency continues 1947 profits will reach a new after-tax record in the neighbourhood of 17 billion dollars.

Yet after a steady uninterrupted rise since the end of the war, United States exports fell abruptly by 13 per cent. in June, and the Census Bureau's report of Sept. 5 revealed a second successive export decline in the month of July. July exports stood at £287,750,000 compared with £310,425,000 in June and £355,450,000 in May, that is a fall of 19 per cent. below the post-war peak in May. Moreover this drop has taken place *before* the drastic cuts in dollar imports that have followed or will follow the recent "dollar crisis" of Western Europe and the Dominions.

The contradictions within American capitalism and American policy are becoming sharper:

The contrast between the wealth and power of the U.S. trusts, the record profits and new plant immensely expanded in the course of

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the war and the falling standard of living of the American people stands out more vividly every day. The U.S. Labour Department's Bureau of Statistics revealed in early September that the net spendable income of a worker with 3 dependents shown in *1939 dollars* had steadily fallen since 1944. In August consumer prices reached a new peak. Compared to the 1935-39 average (100) the consumer price index for mid-June was 157.1. Food prices have risen catastrophically for the ordinary consumer. Thus whilst profits soar, the living standards and purchasing power of the American grow steadily less.

With the steadily diminishing home market, Wall Street comes to rely more and more on increasing exports. This is the economic root of the fight for "equality of opportunity" at the Paris Peace Conference, of the United States policy inside the International Trade Organisation. It is the basis of the Truman Doctrine. U.S. exports in 1946 exceeded imports by 8,150 million dollars. In 1947, until the recent drop of exports, an excess of exports of some 12 billion dollars seemed probable. This policy could not possibly be continued without either a world dollar crisis or a radical change in U.S. trade and credit policy. The inevitable dollar crisis has now broken.

The State Department and the more far sighted section of U.S. reaction see the need for extending loans to their political allies, saving them, at least for the present, from internal collapse, and preserving them as future markets for American goods. Yet the doctrine of providing large sums of money for corrupt inept reactionary governments is not proving a paying proposition as experience in Greece, and, above all, in China, has shown.

It is not difficult to see why the U.S. Government, with all its desire to thwart the progress of Chinese democracy, hesitates before advancing new loans to the Kuomintang. General Wedemeyer, after his recent visit to China, had to express his concern at the corruption and inefficiency of Chiang Kai-shek's Government and, typical of the view of important U.S. financial circles, the American "China Weekly Review," published at Shanghai, wrote in a recent editorial:

> From the banker's point of view, China, split by civil war and daily wallowing deeper in economic and political confusion, is a poor risk.

This symbolizes the State Department's dilemma. How can it present China, Greece, Turkey, Western Europe, as a paying proposition to the hard-boiled tight fisted Republican bankers? How can it advance its proposals for financing world reaction in a form likely to win votes at the next Presidential elections? That is why the wretched sixteen at Paris (convened on the State Department's orders by Mr. Bevin and M. Bidault, the whippers-in for Wall Street), after weeks of hard statistical wangling, are told by the U.S. visitors to the last stages of the Conference that their "shopping list" will not be accepted by the American public, that they must think again, and spontaneously work out a new proposition in a more palatable form. Yet this is itself a contradiction, for if the sixteen were really, as Mr.

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Clayton demands, to reconsider, and so develop European economy as to be independent of American aid, this would itself be the greatest blow to U.S. capitalism. What the State Department wants is not a progressive expanding mutually developing European economy, as proposed by the communists and progressives in all European countries, but a paper plan of the type they can put across the American public, above all the recalcitrant Republican leaders who are already canvassing the next elections.

Thus Wall Street is daily faced with a deep dilemma: either to provide dollars for corrupt reactionary Governments who pour them down the drain, which "from a banker's point of view" is a "poor risk"; or to develop trade and economic relations and to provide loans and credits for the constructive forces of the world, the Soviet Union, the new democracies, the new Indonesia and Viet-Nam, etc., which is a good risk, but politically anathema.

The aspect of United States policy which finds greatest support from all their reaction is the policy of maintaining in power in Western Germany and Japan the old reactionary forces, which fought the United States in the recent war. U.S. reaction hopes to create bases of influence which will not be troubled by strong democratic movements, which can be guarded directly by U.S. occupation troops and strong industrial centres, which under American control can dominate, together with direct U.S. trade, both Eastern and European markets. Yet here, too, U.S. policy faces a deep contradiction. In the first place these new American bases of Western Germany and Japan, which appear to be directed against the Soviet Union, threaten in the first place the economic and military security of the other capitalist powers, France, Scandinavia, Holland and Belgium, the British Dominions and above all the United Kingdom. The Governments of capitulation to Wall Street, therefore, led by the Bevins, Ramadiers, Bidaults and Evatts meet with increasing resistance from their own people when they support the Wall Street plan for the rebuilding of a strong industrial and reactionary Germany and Japan. Moreover, at a later stage, there is every reason to believe that these U.S. creations will turn, like Frankenstein, against their own master and creator.

World reaction is grouped ever more clearly around the main centre of reaction, the American trusts. The strengthening of socialism in the U.S.S.R. now in gradual transition to communism, the democracies of a new type in Europe, the strengthening of popular democracy in Viet-Nam and Indonesia and above all in liberated China, the strengthened Communist Parties and their socialist and democratic allies in Western Europe, the new developments of India, Burma, and the Middle East, the growth of the World Federation of Trade Unions which now (with the affiliation of the German and Japanese trade unions) will have more than 80 million members, is a spectre that haunts the bourgeoisie without respite. The self-styled patriots and "nationalists," the Churchills, De Gaulles, Sforzas,

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Tsaldaris, Francos and Chiang Kai-sheks, are ready, in order to try and stem the course of history, to betray the national interests of their own countries, and in order to preserve their own class privileges to surrender national independence and accept Wall Street colonisation. The main allies of world reaction, the Vatican hierarchy and right wing social-democracy, also accept the Washington lead. Bevin and Blum, Schumacher, Saregat, Peyer and company, openly accept the directions of Wall Street, the dominant interest groups that control American capitalist economy, against the working class and working people in their own countries and in the socialist and popular democratic lands. The Vatican creates new American Cardinals and contentedly takes its orders from all brands of American heretics. The slogan " United States of Europe " developed by French reaction after the first World War to combine European reaction against the Soviet Union, was continued by Hitler in his efforts to instal the " new order in Europe." Resurrected by Mr. Churchill, it has today found its home at Washington: and the " United States of Europe " means today the Europe of the United States. France, needing to develop her steel industry with coke received from German reparations, is told by the United States that France should supply the German steel mills with ore. Britain's interests call for an immediate turn to trade with " Dominions as well as with the democratic countries of the Continent ": but this is not within the plans of Wall Street.

Yet of all the contrasts and contradictions in world politics, the greatest is that between the rapid peaceful reconstruction and economic development since the war in the Soviet Union and the new democracies of Eastern Europe and the economic and political chaos and confusion inside the old capitalist world.

In each country of the capitalist world a clear alternative opens out before the people. Either to become a colony of Wall Street, to adapt their economy to Wall Street needs, reject all social advance and popular control of industry, hold down the Trade Unions and progressive organisations, and become a base for a future offensive against world socialism and democracy: or to break with Wall Street domination, remove the Government that is capitulating to Wall Street, find a solution to the crisis in advanced social programmes at home, widening public control of industry, cutting profits, planning production and trade, and developing close economic and political relations with the Soviet Union and all democratic countries.

In no country is this issue more clear and more urgent than Great Britain. A sharp break in British policy, home and foreign, would be the greatest single blow at American monopoly and the greatest act of aid to the labour and progressive movement of America. It is not by chance that in those countries which have removed the communist parties from participation in the Government (France, Italy, Belgium), or where the labour or socialist parties have refused to co-operate with the communists, capitulation to Wall Street has been deepest and the economic crisis is most acutely felt today. The remedy is clear.

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THE PUNJAB RIOTS

By P. C. JOSHI

WITHIN two weeks of August 15 and the country-wide rejoicing over the establishment of a National Government, opening the prospect of a new free life for our people, the nation stands horror-struck at the dark menacing clouds rising from the Punjab.

From the two parts of the Punjab mass migration of minorities is taking place after a systematic campaign of mass extermination. The latest Punjab riots far surpass all earlier riots both in the numbers involved and the area affected.

Today is not the time to unravel the chain of cause and effect. It goes far back to the provocative Attlee Award of December last, which laid the basis for the partition of the Punjab, and the claims and counter-claims over boundaries made by the different communities.

The best of our leaders have rightly emphasised not to stress the past. What, however, needs to be known to everyone, whether Hindu or Muslim, whether citizen of the Indian Union or Pakistan, is that there is nothing to choose between the extent of brutalities, or type of atrocities, committed on either side. The numbers killed on both sides surpass all earlier records. The number of women raped and abducted runs into thousands. Neighbourliness, humanity, chivalry, all seem to have disappeared for the time being.

What set this fire alight? What poisoned our people?

1. *Imperialist bureaucracy.* Soon after the Attlee Declaration on February 20, the Punjab Ministry was sacked by Governor Jenkins, who installed his autocratic Section 93 rule, with the result that when the transfer of power came on August 15 our Governments inherited a Province which was already aflame, where the administration had already broken down. Further, the round of riots in March, 1946, in Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore, Amritsar and Jullundur were all in the districts headed by British Deputy Commissioners.

Next, on the eve of transfer of power from August 1 to 15 and then up to September 1, the centre of the latest riots was all the 12 districts on both sides of the border where the British-officered Boundary Force was supposed to keep the peace. Pandit Nehru has publicly hinted that the Boundary Force did not do its job: and every Punjabi, whether in the East or in the West, if questioned, can easily give innumerable examples from his own experience to show how frequently the army and the police took a part in looting, burning, raping and killing.

2. *Punjab's Princes, and vested interests.* Reactionary anti-national elements, nursed under British rule, have played their own part and bear heaviest responsibility inside each community. Punjabi Princes have supplied arms to bands of their own communities, some to the National Guards, some to the Akalis.

In the countryside it is the big landlords who raised and led big

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armed bands to kill or drive out the minorities so that they themselves got their lands and houses, the peasantry got split communally and their own feudal rule was maintained unimpaired.

In the towns it is the war-rich blackmarketeers who have acted as financial patrons of their respective communal organisations. Factory owners, if Hindu, sacked all the Muslim workers and, if Muslim, sacked all the non-Muslim workers and this added fuel to the fire. The aim of the war-rich capitalist elements has been to drive out their trade and industrial rivals to be able to get monopoly control in their own hands.

3. *Political criminals.* Yet this could never have succeeded without reactionary communal leaders who made a bid for mass popularity in the chaotic conditions that have prevailed in the riot-torn Punjab during the last six months. In the Punjab the Congress has always been weak and has become weaker still because of the unnatural alliance with the Unionists first and later with the reactionary Akalis.

In the countryside, the reactionary Akali leadership ruled through armed bands. Their political aim inside the Eastern Punjab is to get a dominant hold over the East Punjab Government. In their illegal leaflets issued in the name of the Government of Khalistan, and distributed *en masse,* they boastfully declare their aim of establishing Khalistan:

"Khalistan is the Empire of Khalsa as left by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sher-i-Punjab. Every Khalsa must pledge himself to this and nothing else."

In fact, what they are planning is a confederation of the Sikh States and the Sikh central districts of the Punjab around Patiala, as the base.

The ambitions of these communal reactionaries are not confined to the Eastern Punjab alone. Both the Mahasabha and the Akalis are running a systematic campaign to discredit and run down the Nehru Government. Their common slogan is that the Nehru Government is neither protecting the minorities in the Western Punjab nor letting them retaliate against the Muslim minorities in the Eastern Punjab. Their slogan is: Nehru must meet Aung San's fate.

In Delhi, the Mahasabha called for an observance of Martyrs' Day on August 30 for which leaflets were distributed in thousands in the name of Jai Bharat in which it openly called:

"Remember 30th August, 1947, when you have to observe Martyrs' Day. The day should begin with mass murder of Muslim children and women alike. Forcible occupation of the Muslim buildings should be your objective. Set fire to Muslim mohallas, but beware that the fire does not spread to Hindu Sikh localities."

The National Government rightly and quickly banned the day.

As in the Indian Union, so in Pakistan, the danger from extreme communalists, all old pro-British elements, is equally great. In the beginning Mr. Jinnah and the mass of League leaders were trying to concentrate fire on the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab, completely ignoring the atrocities in the Western Punjab.

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Soon the Pakistan leaders, too, were faced with complete administrative breakdown and the worst reactionaries began denouncing the League leadership itself for not taking strong measures against the atrocities in the Eastern Punjab. And they, too, began to make a bid for leading places inside Provincial and Central Governments. The realisation of this grave situation inside Pakistan itself led to the laudable sentiments in Mr. Jinnah's broadcast speech on August 31:

"These decisions and measures adopted by the special conference should reassure the people of all communities that both the Pakistan and India Governments are determined to put down ruthlessly these orgies and their far-reaching consequences . . . The civilised world is looking upon these doings and happenings with horror, and the fair name of the communities concerned stands blackened in the eyes of the world."

The Punjab riots are being used by the imperialist agencies to discredit both India and Pakistan, to prove that we are incapable of ruling ourselves. Tory papers like Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* are screeching that the Punjab disturbances are due to the hasty withdrawal of British officers.

"Britain's 'precipitate renunciation' of authority in India on August 15 was a gamble with the lives of millions . . . The horrors of the Punjab were the result of 'a hasty and clumsy policy.'"

A *UPA* message from Washington, dated August 27, states that the Anglo-American Joint Chiefs of Staff are watching to see that the Punjab riots do not become a menace to the security of South East Asia. In other words, they are waiting to see how far their own military juniors, who unfortunately yet remain the leaders and commanders of our armed forces, can get an excuse for intervening as a "neutral force" and getting a stronger grip over our defence. The same message says that their diplomatic interest goes to show that disturbances in India would mean that we shall not be able to play our leading role in Asia. This danger is real. Instead of India continuing to play an active role against imperialist intervention in Indonesia and Viet Nam, we are being threatened with imperialist intervention ourselves. Our international standing, our national honour abroad, is at stake.

Further, the peaceful relations between Pakistan and the Indian Union are at stake. Our Party was the first to warn the country that the British were planning to turn partitioned India into two mutually hostile States. Today the threat is become an actual menace.

The *National Standard* reports that the Pakistan Government is alleged to have supplied two rifles per person in their border areas. The *Free Press Journal* reports that the Eastern Punjab Governor has asked the National Government to send at least 10,000 arms to border villages in the Eastern Punjab to meet the daily raids. The urgent need of the hour is not for either Government to arm their border areas but for both Governments to disarm those that are armed, if we do not want two mutually hostile States to grow up.

The Punjab stirs heroic memories in every heart.

Today it is bleeding, burning, suffering, and calls to all of us for

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aid and not to let its plight overtake any other Province. We must act in aid of the Punjab and in our own interest. The two are one.

(1) All Support to Government. Reaction is threatening our two Governments and it is the duty of us all to rally whole-heartedly and enthusiastically behind them and pledge them all our support.

It is a very good sign that the two Governments are co-operating closely. We must demand the closest co-operation. That way lies the shortest path toward restoring peace and establishing good relations. The primary efforts have got to come from the two Governments themselves, so far as restoring peace within the Punjab is concerned and also for mobilising the popular forces outside for any and every service required. It is here that the great weakness lies because the two Governments are still relying only on the bureaucracy which is rotten to the core and needs a drastic and immediate purge.

(2) Send New Troops. The Punjab riots, on both sides, need quelling with firm military action. The troops there are the very same that constituted the Boundary Force and who have already been infected with communal poison and have been guilty of the worst atrocities. It is necessary to disarm and withdraw all these troops and send the British officers back home.

The immediate necessity is for Pandit Nehru to appeal to the patriotism of the Indian army and send new troops under picked loyal patriotic Indian officers, of whom there are plenty, with orders to arrest and disarm all the armed gangs, and restore peace for the people who have been terrorised or misled. Further, both the Premiers must appeal for an army of patriotic volunteers for service in the disturbed areas together with the armed forces for aiding the task of rehabilitation, relief, raising mass morale and going all out to fight provocation and bring the minorities back to their own homes.

Such is also the demand of all non-communal Congressmen in the Punjab who are feeling utterly miserable and helpless, because by themselves they feel overwhelmed by the communal elements.

(3) All Help to Refugees. A big problem of the moment is that of the refugees. They must be assured a welcome and all reasonable relief in camps run by all-parties' committees. This will at once reverse the present position when the worst communal elements are exploiting the refugees and using them for spreading atrocity tales.

The sooner peace is restored in the disturbed areas through a combination of Government and popular efforts the faster we will work to a situation when the refugees can go back to their homes in safety and security.

(4) Countrywide Exposure of Reactionaries. The spirit of retaliation can no longer be fought by moral sermons alone.

Inside the Indian Union it is the duty of us all who love India, stand for progress and are pledged to fight for democracy to rouse our people against dark communal elements, the RSS and the Akali leaders of the Punjab, and similar elements in every Province who would rouse the spirit of retaliation.

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Inside Pakistan we look forward to progressive Leaguers seeking the co-operation of all popular elements and fighting their Noons, disarming the Muslim National Guards, and warning the Pirs against the misuse of religion.

In every town and district the initiative must come from the Left in rousing the people against the spirit of retaliation and all riot-mongers and firmly holding out that our real battle is not one against the other but all together against the vested interests and for a new social order.

Book Reviews

A Programme For The Crisis

Looking Ahead by Harry Pollitt (Communist Party, pp 128, 2*s*).

"Looking Ahead" is a challenging booklet which will be read with interest by everyone in the movement, no matter to which section he belongs.

Pollitt's method is to analyse the entire situation from a working class socialist point of view, a change from the pseudo-objective explanations which abound in too many quarters today. He certainly establishes a case which is a challenge to those who think, as I do, that the purpose of the movement is still the establishment of Socialism.

What we are witnessing today on a world scale, claims Pollitt, is a struggle between the advancing forces of world Socialism and those of world reaction. Victory over Hitler fascism in the war has not only shown the strength of Socialism in Russia, but has brought about the victory of the working class forces in Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, and a number of other countries. There has been an enormous development of the forces of the people in India, Burma, Indonesia and the colonial countries which spells the doom of the old imperialist system. The birth of the 70 million strong World Federation of Trade Unions and the strengthening of the Labour and Communist parties in Europe, are all evidence of the change brought about by the war.

These developments have been hailed by militant workers everywhere, but have been received with consternation by Wall Street and Dollar Imperialism. Today, declares Pollitt, the United States is in the lead in trying to hold back the progressive forces of the world.

The attacks on the new democracies by Wall Street and the pressure exerted by Wall Street by the Dollar Loan on Labour Britain are, claims Pollitt, opposite sides of the same medal.

Pollitt's analysis of Britain's internal crisis is linked up with this main idea. His examination of the foreign policy of the Government is, as is to be expected, trenchant. He asks the question, "Why is it that a Labour Foreign Secretary can find more in common with the U.S.A. than with Socialist Russia?"

Independence of this country from America is now a vital issue, but how is it to be assured? America did not draft the terms of the Loan Agreement to help Labour Britain, but to assist the U.S. drive to world domination. The import cuts and the reduced rations are the price we are paying for a policy of alliance with Wall Street instead of an alliance with the forces of Socialism and progress in Europe. This is Pollitt's case. What other explanation can there be that when faced with such a position as that in Britain the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement is not signed? It is this foreign policy which has also resulted in our excessive armed forces, the drain it means in our overseas finance, and the loss to peaceful production.

In the midst of all our problems there are many trade unionists who,

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like Pollitt, cannot understand why there is not an overall economic plan; why nationalisation is so slow. No wonder the production position in the country goes from bad to worse. And when all the appeals are being made to the people to produce more (and this they must do), when are we going to see action against the rich and the profits of the capitalist class? Others, besides Pollitt, are asking these questions.

Nationalisation is vital. The nationalisation of the coal industry is one victory won under the Labour Government, but to its peril only can the Government abandon the nationalisation of steel.

If there's one thing upon which I agree with Pollitt, it is when he claims that coal is the key to any plan. I warmly endorse his demands based on the Miners' Charter. If the labour is to be got for the essential, but undermanned industries, the declared Government policy of attraction must be implemented, and I note that Pollitt quotes with approval the resolution tabled by the miners and carried by the Margate Conference of the Labour Party.

With the programme advanced for the solution of the crisis, who dares disagree? Pollitt advocates an overall economic plan for the main industries and the rapid extension of nationalisation, especially steel, the drastic cutting of the armed forces by 500,000, standing up to Wall Street and a foreign policy which brings us close to our Socialist allies, a trade agreement with the Soviet Union now and common action with the Dominions and the colonies, a capital tax, profit restrictions, and class action against the rich. Every day this programme is delayed makes the crisis deeper.

Pollitt argues for the need of Government changes. The issue is not whether there should be changes, but what kind of changes. There will be a major Government reshuffle, that is certain. Let us see it is one which strengthens the left and not the right.

As is to be expected, Pollitt concludes his booklet with a strong case for the Communist Party and working class unity to face the crisis. One can agree or disagree with the need to be a Communist, but knowing the position in my own industry, I cannot but pay tribute to the work of my Communist colleagues. I have always supported Communist affiliation and working class unity, and always will. Today this unity is more vital than ever before; with that claim of Pollitt I completely agree.

It is about high time, too, we saw an end to the bans and restrictions within the movement. Why should the miners' secretary, Arthur Horner, freely elected by the men, not be allowed to represent his union at the Labour Party Conference? This is an anomaly which, as Pollitt correctly observes, is dangerous for the whole movement.

I cannot agree with everything in "Looking Ahead," but I have no hesitation in saying it is a book which deserves the widest circulation in the movement and a fighting, thoughtful contribution to the grave problems which face us today.

WILL LAWTHER.

The History Of The Roman Empire

The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West by F. W. Walbank (1946, Cobbett Press, 97 pp., 7*s* 6*d*).

As our own civilization develops signs of instability—no greater than those which it showed between 1550 and 1650, but certainly greater than any which have been apparent since then—we naturally turn for guidance to the history of the Roman Empire. Professor Walbank has something new to say about it. He emphasises the point, which is familiar to readers of Prof. Farrington's books, that as a result of slavery technique, and therefore wealth, declined. But he goes on to a novel account of the economic and political measures taken by the later Roman Emperors, and particularly by Diocletian, to deal with the economic and political crisis of the third century.

The historians of that time gave no

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name to these changes, and to a bourgeois historian of the nineteenth century the debasement of the currency, the fixing of maximum prices, the formation of industrial guilds in which membership was hereditary and the establishment of a secret police, seemed mere perverse mistakes. Professor Walbank shows it is possible to equate the late Roman Empire with the Fascist Corporative State. He makes out a very strong case for this identification, and he makes it the more cogently because he claims that those who made the change could not have avoided doing so if they wished to preserve a class system, as they inevitably did. Future scholars will doubtless question some of Walbank's analogies. For example, it could be argued that the *collegia*, or guilds, had already become important before the second century A.D., and that under Augustus capitalism was still developing rapidly. Nevertheless Professor Walbank's book will probably be a permanent contribution to historical thought.

It will also be an excellent starting point for Marxists who wish to begin a study of ancient Roman history, particularly on account of the bibliography, whose only flaws, to my mind, were the exclusion on the one hand of books dealing specifically with the religious movements of his period, and on the other of Petrie's "The Revolution of Civilisation." For the Christian Church organised itself in the period under consideration and absorbed much of its ideology, so that it is no accident that the Vatican is backing Fascism today as it backed Constantine sixteen centuries ago. And Petrie produced many of Spengler's seminal ideas before Spengler, using far less paper in the process, just as Bottomley anticipated much of the fascist ideology, and might have become dictator of Britain had he been fortunate enough to live in a revolutionary situation.

I must, however, end on a note of doubt. Shi Huang Ti gave China a political system which withstood both internal crisis and foreign invasion for two thousand years, and was only overthrown by the pressure of Western industrialism. Could Antonius Pius have done the same for the Roman Empire? And if not, why not? Until this question has been seriously discussed by scholars with the necessary knowledge, I cannot admit that the evolution of European society followed an inevitable path.

J. B. S. HALDANE.

National Hero Of Bulgaria

There is a Spirit in Europe. A memoir of Frank Thompson. (Gollanz, 12*s* 6*d*, 191 pp.).

IN JUNE, 1944, Frank Thompson, who had been dropped by parachute in Bulgaria to aid the partisans, was shot by the Germans. It was not till March, 1945, when an eye witness of the shooting, a Bulgarian delegate to the World Trade Union Conference, came to London, that the full story was revealed in England.

"By what right do you, an Englishman, enter our country and wage war against us?" he was asked.

Major Thompson answered, "I came because this war is something very much deeper than a struggle of nation against nation. The greatest thing in the world now is the struggle of Anti-Fascism against Fascism" . . .

This memoir, which is prepared by his mother and brother from his letters and diaries, is not only the record of a charming, vivid and sensitive personality; it is a testament to the new Europe, to the new society in which Thompson was finding comradeship and fulfilment. In the course of his years overseas he was experimenting, studying, taking part in all Army activities, perfecting himself as as officer and following closely events in Europe; listening to European and Russian radio news, making contacts and friends among the soldiers and people of all nationalities he met. From 1942 onwards he became increasingly aware of the movements taking shape in Europe:

> "I'm unspeakably angry about a great many things, but optimistic about the final result. Black and white are beginning to show up uncomfortably in a great many

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places. And the overwhelming balance of courage, brains, humour, vitality and perseverance are on our side."

He comments bitterly on B.B.C. propaganda to Eastern Europe, on reactionary aspects of British Army life, on living conditions in the Middle East and Persia.

It was as a Marxist, as one in love with life in all its forms, that he learned about people and about the war, analysing with charm and humour and integrating his experiences until, at the time of the Bulgarian mission, "his widely varied personality closes like a fist into tight integration; he sees at last an opportunity for living with all his faculties extended—in close comradeship to a clearly sighted end." A partisan leader said: "Yes, he was a good man. He shared our hardships, he understood our problems and he even learned our songs."

Himself he wrote of the Yugoslav Resistance:

> "It's heartbreaking to think of the casualties these splendid people have suffered. But a democrat has a great advantage over the people he is fighting. Even his death is in a sense, creative. When a democrat dies—that is, a man who has shown as they have by word and action that he cares more than anything for democratic freedom—then one, or a hundred new ones are created by his example."

Frank Thompson was a democrat of this type.

M. J. CARRITT.

Embalming An Election

The British General Election of 1945 by R. B. McCallum and A. Readman (Oxford University Press, 18*s*).

It is a singular fact that the General Elections of Britain, which should in the traditional democratic theory represent the decisive moments of its modern history when the sovereignty of the people is revealed, have been left almost unrecorded by the historian save in the bare summary of the results. The famous—or notorious—elections of the past, the Khaki election, the Chinese Slavery election, the People's Budget and Peers versus People elections, the Hang the Kaiser, Zinoviev letter and Post Office Savings Scare elections remain memories embedded in the files of newspapers or in the prim pages of the Annual Register.

The authors of this study have remedied this neglect in the case of the General Election of 1945. They have had the initiative and patience to attempt a full-length research study of this election while the documents, memories and records are fresh. Under the auspices of Nuffield College they have conducted a survey which is comprehensive, well-documented and readable, and which endeavours to be impartial. The work suffers from being based on documents and Press records more than on direct contact save in a very limited sphere. But it remains a record which will be of lasting value.

R. P. D.

SHORTER NOTICES

Marginal Costing by F. C. Lawrence and E. N. Humphreys (Macdonald and Evans, 12*s* 6*d*).

Costing is a comparatively new science, of importance to all concerned with management of production and distribution, whether under private enterprise or nationalisation. This book by avowed believers in the former, deals with yet another development of it, and outlines a simple and commonsense approach to the problem of the treatment of the "fixed" overheads in the costing of any business. It will be of interest to all who have either to prepare or be guided by accounts.

P. J. W.

Labour Fact Book—8, by Labor Research Association (International Publishers, New York, pp. 208, $2).

This gives up to Spring, 1947, recent economic trends in the U.S.A., facts of monopoly and finance, social conditions, negro conditions, trade union developments, etc., etc., and is indispensable here for political leaders.

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Correspondence

To the Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY

The review of my book, "Class Struggles in Ancient Greece," in the July issue of "Labour Monthly" indicates a great deal of misunderstanding about both the purpose and the subject matter of the book. It was based on a thesis of 452 pages of which as many as 137 pages were notes and 14 of condensed bibliography. I was advised by a Marxist scholar to shorten it drastically into a popular form as he thought its ideas deserved a wide public. Unfortunately, in doing this the detailed notes, arguments and references had to be dropped and the reader was referred to the original thesis if he wished to consult these.

This has proved to be a serious mistake. At best new ideas always need several years before a final estimate can be made of them, but meanwhile it is essential to have the most detailed arguments and references to back them. For instance, the review complains that the matriarchate, the alphabet and the role of Philip V are not dealt with adequately, but details on these will be found in the original thesis in varying lengths according to whether they are relevant to the subject matter. There is a criticism that no investigation is made of the early tribal society and no mention made of later Greek scientists such as Anaximenes, but I expressly state in my foreword that the book does not attempt to cover the whole period of class struggle in Greece and still less to deal with the whole of Greek civilisation.

His criticism of the part dealing with the Bronze Age is surprising because practically all of it is based on the work of Professor Childe, an authority on that period acknowledged by Marxists. In fact, the particular phrase objected to, 'The Bronze Age states usually broke up after only about a hundred years," is actually Professor Childe's (M.M.H. p.264, n.2; B.A.p.18) and due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. The reviewer goes on to make the statement that "The Egyptian kingdom lasted . . . . for close on three thousand years." This is such a departure from Marxist method as to make one suspect it to be an unintentional slip. It is as if one were to state that the Greek state lasted from ancient times to the present day, which means little or nothing as a historical statement.

The use of the terms "bourgeois" and "feudalism" for ancient times has precedence in other Marxist works, but I was extremely careful in a footnote and elsewhere to explain the limited use of these, so there is absolutely no justification for confusion. In fact, many readers have found them of great value in understanding not only ancient society itself but in appreciating the differences between ancient and modern times. I was more cautious about the use of the word "capital," but even here I have the authority of Marx himself, who used it of the ancient world and was careful to distinguish the different aspects of it as I have done.

Finally the reviewer complains that the explanation suggested for the failure of slavery to develop in the modern world is not related to the development of the productive forces. If my argument did do this it would indeed be a serious mistake. But the very opposite is true! It is actually based on the productive development and the whole point of sketching in the Bronze Age and the early medieval periods was in order to hammer home the differences in production and how these affected social developments and finally made the disappearance of slavery possible. The length of time involved in the decline of the Roman Empire is certainly emphasised, but precisely because it was the result of the great economic changes involved in the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age. This theory has been presented only tentatively as a possible starting point for research on the enormous problem of why slavery did not develop in the modern world. It is a problem which can only be solved by the combined research of experts covering prehistory, classical, ancient history and the early and late medieval periods. Any first word on the subject therefore can only hope to indicate a possible line of research, and my theory attempts no more. But I hope other comrades will use the original thesis and carry on from there.

In short, once misunderstandings are cleared away there seems little ground for serious disagreement between the book and the reviewer. It is all the more unfortunate therefore that such confusion should be allowed to arise, for it can only benefit our opponents. I suggest that more co-operation between comrades would help to avoid it in future.

MARGARET WASON

REPLY FROM OUR REVIEWER

I have nothing to retract, and will add only this:

The author's ideas about tribal society and the status of women in the Bronze Age (p.57) are such that she might never have read "The Origin of the Family." It is true that Gordon Childe devotes very little attention to these questions, but a Marxist should be the first to appreciate that Childe, with all his merits, has not superseded Engels. And how carefully has she read Childe? The mistakes in her account of the alphabet could easily have been corrected from "Man Makes Himself" or "What Happened in History," and her references to M.M.H. p.264, n.2 and B.A. p.18 are both false. There are no footnotes on p.264 of "Man Makes Himself," and the nearest approach to the phrase she claims to have found there is a statement to the effect that the ancient "empires" of the Near East were "short-lived." Nor does the phrase appear on p.18 of "The Bronze Age," but that page does contain the following: "Thereafter (i.e. after Hammurabi G.T.) Babylon remained the capital of a united Babylonia for close on 1,500 years."

I hope enough has now been said to enable your readers to judge for themselves.

GEORGE THOMPSON

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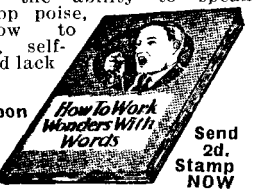

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